

News about the big lottery — page 12

MP'S WELCOME 'SAVE A BABY' CAMPAIGN



• MR Alfred Morris, MP, Minister for the Disabled, congratulates the Society on initiating the 'Save a Baby' campaign, and promised that it would have his 'very close personal and Ministerial interest.'



• MR Lewis Carter-Jones, MP, vocal campaigner for the disabled, speaks to Parliamentary colleagues, and members of the Lords, at an all-party meeting organised by The Spastics Society at the House of Commons in support of the 'Save a Baby' campaign. Director James Loring urged the Government to take action to avoid babies being born with unnecessary handicaps. Mr Carter-Jones said: 'Thousands of babies are born in this country every year with a handicap they need not have. If you can think of a better cause, come to me and tell me what it is.' Full story on page 3.



• MR John Hannam, MP, secretary of the all-party disablement group in the House of Commons, said the 'Save a Baby' campaign had the group's full support.

Police are sorry, but —

National Front ban stops our London march

THE march of thousands planned by The Spastics Society down Whitehall on April 23 has had to be cancelled. The decision came after top level talks at Scotland Yard to see if there was any way round the Public Order Act banning marches as a result of the violence erupting at National Front demonstrations.

The ban officially ends on April 24 — just one day after the rally in Trafalgar Square to launch the Society's massive 'Save a Baby' campaign.

The organiser, Barry Peet of the Society's Coombe Farm Centre, said: "The rally is still on but the march can't be held because of its 'softly political' nature."

'It is "softly political" because we were going to march in our thousands behind six wheelchairs

down Whitehall. Then the six would peel off with their helpers to hand in a resolution passed at the rally to Number 10 Downing Street. The resolution urges the Government to spend more money on preventing handicap.'

The decision is a crushing disappointment after

months of work. 'It is the biggest event the Society has ever organised and we intended to hand out banners to the marchers at Trafalgar Square and really make an impact as we marched. Now the gilt has been taken off the gingerbread, all because of the National Front.'

Lewis Carter-Jones, MP, Chairman of the Labour back bench disablement

Cont. on Back Page

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One-sided effort



JIM Harding, of Fritwell, Oxfordshire, faced the world for a month with only half a beard—all in the cause of charity.

It started when he went to a fancy dress dance as 'Rich Man, Poor Man,' with part of his face bearded to represent poverty, the other half clean shaven as affluence. Friends made bets that he would not keep it up for a month, but he did so and sceptics gave donations to a charity fund.

When Jim eventually shaved off his half-beard, £70 had been raised for spastics and a children's party in the village.

Picture by Bicester Advertiser.

Walkers sought for 100-mile cash trail

A 100-MILE sponsored walk along the Cotswold Way is to be held in August, and one of the three causes to benefit will be The Spastics Society's 'Save a Baby' Campaign.

The number of walkers will be restricted to 50 and the foot-path route is not suitable for wheelchairs. The walk will be spread out over four days and accommodation of the youth hostel type will be arranged.

Participants, who must be over 17, can come from any part of the country, provided they arrive at the starting point near Cheltenham on the morning of August 22.

Cost to the walkers will be £20, £10, £5 or nothing, depending on the number of sponsors each person can enrol. Further details from K. Lightowler, The Spastics Centre, Flixton Road, Manchester M31 3BQ.

Up and down in comfort

A NEW lift for disabled persons is on the market, large enough to take a wheelchair and attendant. It is designed to fit into an average sized house and no shaft is needed, thus giving full use of the downstairs area when the lift is parked upstairs and vice versa.

The control buttons can be easily operated from a wheelchair and in the event of a power failure the occupant can lower the lift gently to the ground floor without assistance.

The Ascension Home Lift costs £3,300, including installation, and another £200 or so will need to be spent on building work.

● MORE about new aids and services in "Briefing" on Page 4.



PROUD quintet after the award ceremony. From left: Jonathan, Steven, Rory, Jane and Kim.

Generous mystery man is their 'true friend'

THE mystery benefactor of Wakes Hall, the centre run by the Stars Organisation for Spastics in Essex, has called again. This time he handed over £200.

The man who has made a habit of calling at the centre unannounced to leave monies for the residents, again left without leaving his name.

But matron, Mrs Monique Chapleo, did persuade him to have a cup of tea and a chat. She said: 'He has become a true friend of Wakes Hall and he is now quite at home chatting with us.'

'But he still has not told us who he is, and we do not like to press him. He seems to prefer to remain anonymous and we shall

respect his wish.'

Mrs Chapleo recalled that when the mystery man first started calling 'out of the blue' he would just leave the money and then disappear.

'At least we have got to the stage where we can invite him in for a cup of tea. But whoever and wherever he is we would like to thank him for his generosity, and like him to know that his gifts are appreciated.'



WINDOW ON WALES

by Emlyn Davies

Now John has the words to thank his new friends

THE adult literacy scheme is now well-known in the United Kingdom. John Moses, who lives at the Society's Mena House Hostel in Penarth, is not so well known. A few months ago a member of the scheme and John came together and for John — for whom speaking is difficult and holding a pencil almost impossible — it proved to be a very beneficial introduction.

Mrs Angela Bishop found that after a few months John had made remarkable progress in both reading and writing and she realised that if John were to communicate easily he would need an electric typewriter.

She wrote to the Penarth Rotary Club and was told about the IBM scheme which helps disabled people acquire secondhand electric typewriters at reduced prices. Rotary promised to pay for a machine and take out a service contract.

Finally, at a ceremony at Mena House, John was given his electric typewriter by Rotary President Mr Mike

Fullbrook. IBM is arranging for the machine to be installed and will train John to make the best use of it.

Mrs Bishop says she is sure that John would put the typewriter to good use. I believe he has already typed his thanks to the people who have helped him obtain it.

New support for therapy on wheels

THE mobile physiotherapy unit based in Ceredigion is obtaining more and more support for funds to run the service. The latest was a coffee morning on February 9 at the Talbot Hotel, Aberystwyth, organised by the Aberystwyth fund-raising committee, when £80 was raised. The Mayor and Mayoress, Councillor and Mrs R. K. Clues, attended.

This was the first of many events which the group intend to organise to support this most worthwhile of services.

Bringing back the birds—and a prize

THE Society's Craig-y-Parc School has a Young Farmers' Club as one of its many interests for children.

Its latest project called 'Bring Back the Birds' was organised by Mr Hughes and Mr Pettican, both teachers at the school, and put forward for a Prince of Wales Award.

The project involved months of work including making a cine film, recording the visits of birds to various tables, and keeping charts to determine the best feeding times.

One of the spin-offs of this was that many different species of birds visited the tables to be noted and subsequently drawn and painted. A unique aspect of the project and one which I have seen for myself, was a nesting box built so that the classroom window became the back of the box. Fortunately, two bluetits came to take up residence and hatch out a fledgling. By clever use of the video camera and its zoom lens, first-class pictures were obtained of the parents looking after and bringing up their youngsters.

The result of all this enthusiastic involvement was an award presented to Rory Turner on behalf of the Young Farmers' Club of Craig-y-Parc by Prince Charles at Bryngwyn School, Llanelli.

The news about John Bell & Croyden is certainly getting about

John Bell & Croyden can really help you get about more easily at holiday time... or for that matter at any time. Our large store in Wigmore Street stocks a great many aids to make life easier for you and we have specially trained staff to give you all the help you may need.

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SN Mar21

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SN Mar13

'Save a Baby' campaign wins powerful supporters



JAMES Loring, the Society's Director at the House of Commons. Also at the midday meeting were Joyce Smith, a vice-chairman of The Spastics Society, and Society founder member Ian Dawson Shepherd, plus members of the Medical Advisory Committee.



Offers and Wants

FOR SALE: Braun Battiricar — white — two batteries — very good condition. £365. Gardner, 3 Hutwood Road, Chilworth, Southampton, Hants. Tel: Southampton 767346.

MISS J. Pearce, from Cornwall, would like a male pen-friend, aged 38-43, able-bodied or slightly disabled, living in the same area. She is herself disabled and petite with dark hair and blue eyes. Her hobbies are knitting, cooking, collecting records, TV, Red Cross, St John and fund-raising for the disabled.

Please write to: Miss J. Pearce, 4 The Moors, Lostwithiel, Cornwall PL22 0BU.

● **INDIVIDUAL** spastic people, their relatives, or local voluntary group members may advertise their Offers and Wants in this column without charge. Write to the Editor at the address on Page 12.

TWO veteran campaigners on behalf of the handicapped, Lewis Carter-Jones, MP, and Baroness D'Arcy de Knayth, with the Society's Director of Fund Raising, Mike Brophy, in the background.



PAEDIATRIC Research Unit Chief, Professor Paul Polani and colleague, Dr Eva Alberman, were two of the distinguished team of scientists present at the House of Commons meeting.

THE Spastics Society took the 'Save a Baby' campaign into the corridors of power in February, and won support from members of all parties for its fight to save babies from needless handicap. Minister for the Disabled, Mr Alfred Morris, plus 17 MPs and nine members of the House of Lords — all of them with a special interest in the cause of the disabled — attended the all-party meeting at the House of Commons to hear Mr James Loring, Director of The Spastics Society, urge the Government to implement a seven-point plan of action on prevention of handicap.

Mr Morris warmly congratulated the Society on the 'Save a Baby' campaign, and promised that he would take a close personal and Ministerial interest in its progress. He announced that meetings would be held between officials from his Department and the Society to discuss measures on prevention of handicap.

'Naturally I want to do everything to save children from needless handicaps,' he said, and added that he wanted voluntary organisations to work with the Government — 'which is very considerably concerned' — on measures which would improve the situation.

Mr Lewis Carter-Jones, MP, was sponsor for the meeting and this veteran of many campaigns to improve benefits and conditions for the disabled left his audience in no doubt where his sympathies lay. He declared: 'Thousands of kids are born in this country every year with a handicap they need not have. If you can think of a better cause, come to me and tell me what it is!' And John Hannam, MP, pledged the support of the all-party disablement group for the campaign which, he said, had important implications for parents and children abroad as well as in Britain, because developing countries looked to the UK to give a lead.

Mr Loring told the meeting that for many years the Society had been deeply concerned with preventing handicap, through research, publications, study groups and seminars and this work had reached all corners of the world. 'Lately we have concluded that we have not done enough and we have decided that whilst con-

tinuing our support of research we would go public and tell the nation at large how we think the prevention of handicap should be tackled'.

He went on: 'My primary concern is with the humane side of the problem; the grief and suffering and indeed the misery of having a handicapped baby, or perhaps worse, a stillborn baby. For it is not just handicap that lurks around the corner, it is also death.'

'There were 655,503 births in England, Scotland and Wales in 1976. Of these, 6,338 babies were stillborn and 11,764 babies died perinatally, that is between the 28th week of pregnancy and the end of the first week of life. Of the surviving 637,401 babies it is estimated that 29,410 babies were perinatally damaged. Not all of these babies are seriously handicapped, but those who are represent human tragedy, and in a majority of cases a vast additional cost to the community.'

The cost

'For example, a severely handicapped boy or girl leaving one of our schools at the age of 16 and living in residential care until the age of 65 would cost the community approximately £4 million at today's prices to which must be added the negative costs of non-productivity, non-contribution to social services, etc. Yet the cost of prevention in the majority of cases is so significantly less that comparison is hardly worth making.'

Research had already shown, said Mr Loring, that if all available knowledge was applied 40 per cent of all cases of cerebral palsy could be prevented. Further research was

necessary to probe the causes of the remaining 60 per cent of cases, but that would be less costly than caring for handicapped people for life.

'We have sufficient knowledge to reduce the numbers of brain damaged babies, but seemingly as a nation we lack the muscle to implement the knowledge on a national scale.'

Sad facts

'Our overall perinatal mortality rate of 17.7 per 1,000 births is not too good when compared to the Swedish perinatal mortality rate of 11.3. But what is shockingly wrong is the wide variation within Great Britain. Oxford has a perinatal mortality rate of 10.3, but in Wolverhampton the rate is 23.5. These wide variations are again reflected in socio-economic factors. Women in social class 1 have a perinatal mortality rate of 7.5 — less than half the national rate — but 27 out of every 1,000 babies born to women in social class 5 will die. In the case of single mothers, and this is increasingly a large group of the child-bearing population, the perinatal mortality rate rises to a staggering 37.4 per 1,000 births. It is indeed a blot on the national conscience that such regional and class variations exist.'

Petition

Mr Loring outlined the Society's plans for the 'Save a Baby' campaign — the Trafalgar Square rally on April 23, the advertising, the films, medical seminars, the five-million signature petition, plus other activities — and concluded:

'This will be a political campaign with a small "p", and we hope that all parties will support it in much the same way that the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Bill received general support. Certainly it should not become a matter of party politics. Indeed, it presents all parties with the possibility of putting aside inertia and indifference in this matter and espousing it as a case. It is a great cause because upon its success depends the future health of our mothers and babies.'



Society's action plan

THE Society's seven-point plan of action on prevention of handicap urges the Government to:

- Review the whole field of prevention of handicap as a matter of urgency and establish a national plan so that, where necessary, sufficient funds can be allocated towards reducing the incidence of handicap, bearing in mind the very substantial savings which would thereby accrue. It also urges the medical profession and, in particular, obstetricians and paediatricians, to play an active role in the establishment of such a plan.

- Institute cost benefit studies which would identify clearly what financial savings could be made by reducing the prevalence of handicap and what resources are needed to reduce the costs of handicapping conditions.

- Reassess services in all health districts where perinatal mortality and morbidity rates are high. Examine the child care practices, services and equipment in those areas and designate them 'special areas' in order that action can be taken immediately. To this end, obtain evidence which would establish what factors have produced high rates of perinatal mortality and morbidity.

- Abandon immediately any proposed financial cuts in maternity services.

- Disseminate information and knowledge on prevention to the health professions and public.

- Close inefficient maternity units and by this saving, and with any additional resources necessary, create in every health authority efficient first class maternity, special and intensive care facilities for the newborn.

- Institute such additional research programmes as are necessary, in particular: the causes and prevention of prematurity and low birthweight; the causes and management of anoxia; the prevention of infections that lead to reproductive failure; the epidemiology of cerebral palsy; the delivery of health services during the antenatal and perinatal periods to determine those areas to which additional resources should be allocated; the prediction, prevention and treatment of child abuse.



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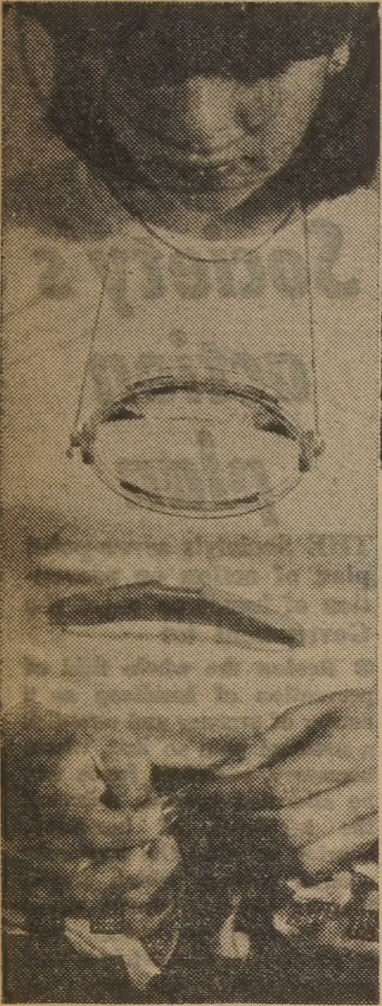
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Briefing . . .

on books, aids, holidays, services, to help you and your family



New view

A NEW dual-purpose magnifying glass now on the market would be useful to those with both visual handicaps and poor hand control. The magnifier hangs round the neck, stabilised by a base unit which rests against the body, thus leaving both hands free, as seen in the photograph.

It can also be removed from the base unit and used as a hand reader. The large-size lens means that objects, magnified to twice the actual size, can be viewed with both eyes.

The Oro DP magnifier is manufactured by Combined Optical Industries Ltd, 200 Bath Road, Slough SL1 4DW. Costing about £3 plus VAT, it is available from most large stores and multiple chemists.

Friends

THE conference held annually during Friendship Week for Sick and Handicapped Children will this year take place on Tuesday, June 13, at the Royal College of Surgeons in London. The title of the conference will be 'Sixteen Plus and Handicapped — Education for Living.'

Speakers will include Miss Margaret Jackson, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Education, and Mr Peter Large, MBE, Chairman, Association of Disabled Professionals.

Further information from Mrs V. Abrahams, 3 Tottenham Close, Kenton, Middlesex. Tel: 01-907 3024 and 01-730 9891.

National camp for over 16's

A NATIONAL camp for mentally handicapped over-16s will be organised by Croydon social services department during Mental Health Week—June 17 to 24, 1978.

For some years Croydon has pioneered both adventure holidays and training for the mentally handicapped. In 1977, over 140 people from hospitals, Gateway Clubs and

training centres, attended the Croydon National Jubilee Camp for the mentally handicapped.

The 1978 camp will be held at Frylands Wood, Addington, Croydon, a 60-acre woodland site four miles from the centre of Croydon. Facilities will include a camp shop, evening entertainment and the use of a nearby swimming pool.

Groups taking part will be expected to provide their own equipment and helpers. Croy-

don social services staff and a party of volunteers will be available to give advice and practical help and will act as hosts.

Applications are now being invited from groups throughout the United Kingdom. Further details are available from: National Camp for the Mentally Handicapped, Croydon Social Services Department, 33 Cuthbert Road, Croydon CR0 3RB. Tel: 01-686 9441.

Tourists

AN access guide for the disabled tourist in the Loire Valley in France has just been published. It covers travel to and from the area, accommodation, package tours and access to the major chateaux and places of interest from the viewpoint of the wheelchair traveller or those who have difficulty in walking.

It is the first guide of its kind to be bi-lingual, and the major survey sections are in both French and English.

Copies of 'Access in the Loire' are available from RADAR, 25 Mortimer Street, W1, from the French Government Tourist Office, 178 Piccadilly, London W1, or from Survey Projects, 68B Castlebar Road, Ealing W5.

The guide is available free but there is a charge of 20p to cover postal costs.

On wheels

A NEW booklet on wheelchairs is now available in the series 'Equipment for the Disabled.' It gives details of both commercially available wheelchairs and those supplied by the Department of Health and Social Security.

Contents include types and features of wheelchairs, simple home maintenance, self-propelling and elevating chairs, indoor and outdoor electrically powered chairs, pushchairs, semi-static chairs, commodes and sanichairs, wheelchair cushioning, restraining harness, wheelchair accessories, prams and pushchairs, children's mobility aids, DHSS prescription and supply (in UK) of wheelchairs and pedal/hand operated tricycles, addresses of Artificial Limb and Appliance Centres in UK and addresses of DHSS approved repairers of wheelchairs and three-wheelers.

There are 10 companion titles in the same series on various types of equipment.

Further details are available from Equipment for the Disabled, 2 Foredown Drive, Portslade, Sussex BN4 2BB.

Help with holidays

Any handicapped person or a family with a handicapped member needing a holiday but unable to afford one, is entitled to approach their local Social Services Department for assistance with the cost, as the Disabled Persons Act of 1970 gives them powers to provide, where they feel the need exists, opportuni-

ties for leisure activities and holidays for the handicapped. If, for some reason, Social Services are unable to help, there are other trust funds through which handicapped people may qualify for assistance. Further information is available from Mrs B. Quibell, Social Worker, at 16 Fitzroy Square, London W1.



Monster blow up

THIS monster mattress—only part of which is shown—is the ultimate in air beds. Designed and made in Holland, it has been found that the soft surface of the polyvinyl coated polyester fabric coupled with the raised sides, give both spatial definition and confidence to mentally and physically handicapped patients.

The mattress comes in various sizes and takes between three and six minutes to inflate.

Further information is available from the Royal Netherlands Embassy, 38 Hyde Park Gate, London SW7.

The right clothes

DAY courses on clothing for the disabled, elderly, children and the incontinent will be held at the Disabled Living Foundation in West London on 18th and 19th October, 1978. They are intended for Health Service personnel, including physicians in geriatric and paediatric medicine and in rehabilitation as well as community medicine and general practice. Occupational therapists, physiotherapists, nurses, supplies officers, laundry managers and others professionally

concerned with the care of disabled people may also be interested.

Each course lasts for one day and is repeated on the next. Numbers are limited to 20 a day.

The fee will be £8, which will include morning coffee, lunch and tea, and must be included with the application.

Details are available from: Mrs Margery Thornton, CBE, JP, MA, Clothing Adviser, Disabled Living Foundation, 346 Kensington High Street, London W14 8NS.

Look and learn

AUDIOVISUAL material on medical, paramedical and social health subjects can be hired by post from a library in Essex. It takes the form mainly of audiotape cassettes and slides, which can be used on a cassette player and a domestic slide projector or even a hand viewer.

One example from the catalogue of over 1,000 titles is a 36-minute programme illustrated by 42 slides on the 'Bobath Approach to Adult

Hemiplegia.' This is suitable for audiences of physiotherapists, junior nurses and nurses in general practice. It shows the system of treatment developed by Dr and Mrs Bobath.

Although principally a hire service, audiotape programmes may be bought by bona-fide medical and educational personnel or organisations. Details from Graves Medical Audiovisual Library, PO Box 99, Chelmsford, Essex.

there are disappointed relatives, staff who have strained their backs and disabled people who lead unnecessarily restricted lives.

The Foundation would welcome comments from disabled users of hoists, their relatives and all staff who have problems with lifting or with the use of a hoist. There must be many hoists hidden away in storerooms and it would be

interesting to learn why they are not used. Likewise there must be many disabled people who have been given new freedom of mobility by the use of a hoist.

Please send your comments, whether favourable or critical, to Project Officer, Miss C. Tarling, Disabled Living Foundation, 346 Kensington High Street, London, W14 8NS.

Made any good films lately?

AN international rehabilitation film festival will be held in Washington, DC, United States, on May 4-5 1978. It is open to films and videotapes about the physically or mentally handicapped.

Film-makers and distributors from 40 countries are

being invited to participate. All films must have either a soundtrack or subtitles in English.

Films will be awarded first and second prizes in each of six categories: Rehabilitation in physical disability; rehabilitation in mental health; rehabilitation in mental retardation; prejudice and the handicapped; work and play; technology.

Each film may be entered in two categories.

Entry forms and further information may be obtained from: Festival/Intl Rehab Film Review Library, 20 W 40 St, New York, NY 10018, USA.

Aids day

A STUDY day on Educational Technology for the Handicapped Child will be held on Saturday, July 1, 1978, at New Mossford, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex. It covers a broad range of technical aids and equipment developed for physically and mentally handicapped children. There will be opportunity for discussion and for trying out any equipment shown.

Study day fee is £5.50 including refreshments. Parents are especially welcome at a reduced rate of £3 each. Non-professional workers such as toy librarians and welfare officers from local disablement groups are also welcome at the lower rate. Further details from John Thorne, Principal, New Mossford, Civic Way, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex IG6 1HH. (Tel: 01-550 3287/3472.)

Emotions

AN international conference on emotional and sexual needs of handicapped people is to be held at the University of Surrey, Guildford, from July 11-13, 1979.

Papers already planned include: Marriage and cerebral palsy; a study of mentally handicapped married couples; sexual knowledge among residents in two units for spastic adolescents; emotional problems in boys and girls with Still's disease; the integration of two single-sex schools for the disabled into one co-educational school; training in education for relationships and sex; an analysis of client problems and their solutions by SPOD's advisory service; a telephone counselling service for clients with multiple sclerosis; helping parents come to terms with sexuality in severely sub-normal children.

Original papers for the conference are invited, summaries of which should be sent to the SPOD office by June 16, 1978. Further details are available from SPOD, 49 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0EU.

COLLEGE OF LIBRARIANSHIP WALES

PRINCIPAL: F. N. HOGG, MA, DPA, FLA

The College of Librarianship Wales in conjunction with the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, offers courses leading to a Joint Honours Degree of the University of Wales.

The courses are intended for those who wish to make a career in Librarianship and Information Science. As well as providing education in librarianship, they also allow the student to specialise in a subject of his own

choice selected from the range available in the Faculties of Arts or Science. The college also offers a three-term Postgraduate University of Wales Diploma course in library studies as well as a Master's Degree (by thesis) in library studies.

For further information please write to or telephone the Registrar, College of Librarianship Wales, Llanbadarn Fawr, Aberystwyth, Dyfed, SY23 3AS. Tel: Aberystwyth (STD 0970) 3181

SN Mar16

What do you think of hoists?

THE Disabled Living Foundation is compiling a book about hoists. Courses held on the subject have revealed that there is scant literature available on hoists and assessment of the disabled user.

There also appeared to be a lack of information; whether in the form of written instructions or demonstrations, about the actual use of a hoist.

As a result, says the DLF,

LETTERS

'A problem kept under the mat'

I FEEL I must write to thank you for the page on the use of the pill to control the periods of disabled women. This is a problem that people tend to hide under the mat.

I am a spastic of 35, and I have had difficulties since I was 12 years old. I have moved here to Guildford and my new doctor does not help me with the problem. I also get a bad migraine at the same time. My other doctor was very good as he gave me hormone tablets which helped, so I did not have such a hard time.

Problems

I am not complaining because I think that a lot of people must have the same difficulties. I don't know why I have not written to Spastics News about this before, as I find that the paper keeps up with most problems of spastics and other handicapped people. Please do not print my name as I do not want to upset my doctor.

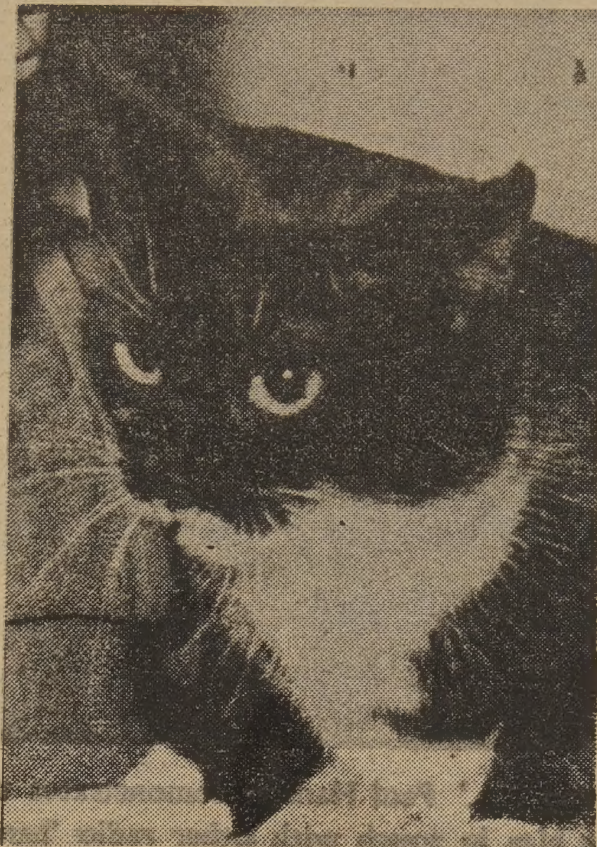
(Name and address supplied)
Guildford,
Surrey.

• LETTERS are welcomed, but the Editor reserves the right to shorten them for publication.

OUR story in last month's issue about Dorabella, the little spastic cat who found a home with the Society's Director and his family, inspired some verses from the pen of Top Ten collector, Nellie de Beaufort Saunders, of Stone, near Aylesbury, Bucks. Nellie, slightly spastic herself, can sympathise with Dorabella's problems.

There was a little cat who inspired a reader's poem...

There was a black and white cat
Who wasn't really fit
For the rough and tumble life
Of a stray who limped a bit.
In fact, decidedly unsteady,
With a wobble in her back,
What she badly needed
Was a home and not a shack.
By a timely stroke of luck —
Or was it feline cunning? —
She found herself a home
And it was really stunning.
Her wily intuition
Told her to be present
And follow so discreetly
'Someone' at 12 Park Crescent.
Perseverance was rewarded,
She was taken home and fed,
And for the first time ever
Had a warm and cosy bed.
Soon a change most wonderful
Began to show in her.
There was sparkle in her eyes
And a sheen upon her fur.
'To complete the transformation
A family home we'll find.
No longer starved and hungry
But secure, with peace of mind.'
'I am looking for a pet
For my son,' said Mr Loring.
'Although she's got a wobble,
She's gentle and adoring.'
She was taken to the surgery
Of the vet to find the cause
Of why she had that wobble;
Was unsteady on her paws.
'Cerebral ataxia!
Most uncommon in a cat.'
The stray's new owner smiled, and said



'Yes, I have heard of that.'
The vet was quite astounded
That Mr Loring knew
All about spasticity —
Known, alas, to few.
And now she is contented.
A spastic, but not a stray.
For, loved by little Benedict,
Dorabella's here to stay.

Nellie de Beaufort Saunders

Exeter guides disabled through maze of rights

HANDICAPPED citizens of Exeter with a query about their rights can easily find out the answer thanks to James Loring, Director of The Spastics Society. He was the originator of the disabled service scheme called Exeter Disability Rights Services, opened by the City's Mayor, Roger Kearst, in February.

In his speech, Mr Kearst had nothing but praise for the Exeter and East Devon Disabled and Handicapped Group which set the service up in premises in Palace Gate, Exeter.

Benefits

The service will collect together all the relevant books and leaflets explaining various government benefits and allowances to which the disabled are entitled.

Mrs Barbara Entwistle, chairman of the group explained: 'Many agencies offer help and services to disabled people but it is a complicated field, and people do not always know where to apply. The Disability Rights Service can act as a signpost for those con-

fused about their rights and entitlements. It will also give support if a person wishes to appeal to a medical board against a decision.'

Mr Loring described the magnitude of the problem of people who did not know they were missing out on certain benefits.

'The Spastics Society produced a booklet which explained the forms of allowances available. That 3,000 copies were sold in 10 days is indicative of how confused these people are.'

Mr Loring also welcomed help from Exeter University, whose lecturers Mr David Gladstone and Prof Robert Leaper in the social administration department are to monitor the progress of the service. Their findings will be presented to the government — the first time such facts will be available.

'Our mobile therapy service'



I WAS very interested indeed to read about the new mobile physiotherapy service which commenced operation in December in the County of Ceredigion and how the service is to be funded during the next two years. Our service here in the Merseyside Metropolitan District of Sefton celebrated its third anniversary in December and I enclose a photograph of our therapists and their van taken to mark the occasion.

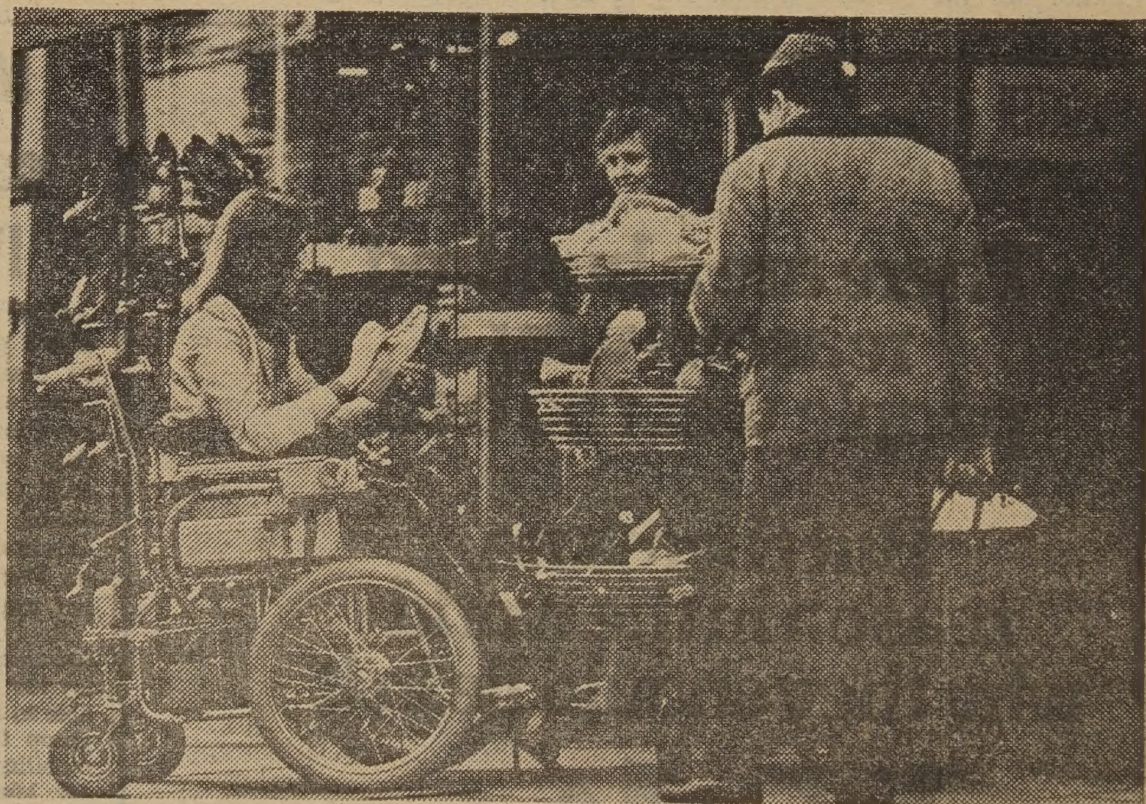
During the last 12

months there has been a significant increase in the number of referrals of children with cerebral palsy and, encouragingly, these referrals are now tending to come from the hospital paediatricians as well as general practitioners. Obviously a domiciliary service like this is limited in its capabilities as compared with a good hospital department, but nevertheless we have found that parents without transport often have the

greatest difficulty in getting their children to the appropriate centre, thus a domiciliary service visiting the home can provide a very useful adjunct to the established services. This indeed is being increasingly recognised by the area health authorities as well as local authority social services committees, and the Cardigan Committee should not feel too inhibited in approaching the statutory authorities for grant aid when the time is ripe, perhaps quoting Circulars HSC(IS)27 and DS95/74.

As a former Spastics Society Executive Council member I enjoy receiving and reading Spastics News, and would like to convey our Service's best wishes to the Cardigan organisers.

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His life was bonud by his wheelchair, now— Paul explores wider horizons

PAUL Hanson is a 46-year-old West Countryman whose life was bounded by the wheelchair he sat in and the mother who looked after his needs.

Now Paul is going to Panama to work as a radio operator for a fully rigged sailing ship which is taking part in an exploration voyage named 'Operation Drake.'

Paul, a spastic, lives with his wife at West Surrey's Cheshire Home in Godalming.

He said: 'I never went to school and I never had a job. My mother looked after me and she was very restrictive. It wasn't till I came to a Cheshire Home that I started living my own life.'

The Cheshire Home in Hampshire, Le Court, not only gave Paul his independence — it introduced him to Hazel, now his wife, and to amateur radio which has brought him the job with the expedition.

Paul explained: 'Group Captain Cheshire wanted all the Cheshire homes linked by radio. All the



'G8HXC calling . . . G8HXC calling . . .' Paul Hanson demonstrates the equipment which each night puts him in touch with other radio 'hams.'

equipment was bought and I used to run the receiver at Le Court. But I left to come here because Hazel and I wanted to get married and this was then the only home with suitable accommodation. It meant, of course, that I had to leave all the equipment behind. Now I have

bought all my own equipment and I've been on a City and Guilds radio course at Farnborough to get my B licence.'

The B licence means that Paul can tune in on UHF and VHF and talk to other operators within a 150-mile radius. 'Now I'm studying hard for my

A class licence because then I will be able to talk on the short wave band to people all over the world. Amateur radio is great fun. I use my set as other people use the telephone.'

'Operation Drake' is a scientific expedition involving young people and will, in part, follow the

route taken by Sir Francis Drake when he circum-navigated the globe. The brigantine 'Eye of the Wind' is the floating base camp but because of his disabilities Paul will not be sailing on her.

'I shall be operating either from the British Embassy in Panama or a jungle base camp, working with the Royal Corps of Signals. I'm flying over with a party of scientists in December and I'll be away for about two months'.

But that will not be the end of his association with the magnificent old sailing ship and her exciting voyage. 'I hope to establish a base station here to keep in contact because the expedition will take two years'.

Leading the expedition is Lt Col John Blashford Snell, the famous explorer who can number the Zaire River Expedition, the Trans-Americas Expedition and the descent of the Blue Nile among his achievements.

With him on the Zaire River venture was the Cheshire Home's Warden Major Gordon Mitchell, and it was this link-up that led to Paul's inclusion on 'Operation Drake.'

Paul is naturally disappointed that he will not be sailing on the ship that looks like something out of the 'Onedin Line,' but is looking forward to pursuing his other hobby of natural history. Meanwhile, back at the Home Hazel will be organising the despatch of first day covers for philatelists. Letters will be conveyed to the different ports of call, franked with the country's postmark and then sent back to Godalming.

Hazel will not be able to call up Paul from their room because, unlike her husband, she is not licensed to operate the radio.

And while he is away Paul hopes that he might meet the Patron of 'Operation Drake'—Prince Charles, who is, after all, a keen sailor.

**If you
don't ask
you don't
get . . .**

A GROUP of parents in Norfolk who themselves have sick or handicapped children have got together to produce a leaflet to help others in the same position. The leaflet is called 'Ask', and an introduction explains.

'Throughout Norwich and Norfolk there are people who are very willing to help you and your child. But often you have to make the first move. Don't be afraid. ASK!'

This leaflet covers health, welfare, education, money, voluntary groups, leisure and holidays, and gives useful names and addresses under each heading of people who can give expert advice.

Copies of the leaflet can be obtained from ASK, Gaffers Cottage, Grange Farm, Spixworth, Norfolk.

Listen to a good book

THE Talking Books for the Handicapped charity has now been in existence for over five years. It provides tape-recorded material for those who are unable to hold a conventional book.

The catalogue gives details of nearly 700 titles and 12 copies of each are produced in order to avoid long waiting lists. The most popular authors include Agatha Christie, Denise Robins, Alistair Maclean, Gerald Durrell and Jack de Manio.

For further details of the scheme please contact Talking Books for the Handicapped, National Listening Library, 48 Great Cumberland Place, London W1H 7LH. (Tel: 01-723 5008.)

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SN Mar19

Mobility cash age limit up

ABOUT 10,000 more disabled people will be able to claim mobility allowance when the upper age limit is extended to 58 later this year. Alf Morris, MP, Minister for the Disabled, announced the extension of the allowance on February 22. The present upper age limit is 55.

Replying to a Parliamentary question from Mr Jack Ashley MP asking whether he was able to announce the next age-group to be phased into the mobility allowance scheme, Mr Morris said:

'I propose to lay a further Commencement Order before the House shortly. This will cover two age-groups of disabled people as follows:

- those born on or after January 14, 1921 to claim from June 7, 1978 with payment from September 6, 1978; and
- those born on or after December 21, 1919 to claim from September 20, 1978 with payment from December 20, 1978.

'When the second age-group is phased in, all eligible disabled people aged between 5 and 58 will be able to claim Mobility Allowance.'

Mobility allowance is a weekly benefit payable to people who are unable or virtually unable to work because of physical disablement, and are likely to remain so for at least 12 months. The benefit is £7 a week at present, but will increase to £10 a week in July. More than 65,000 people are already receiving the allowance. When mobility allowance is fully phased in — by 1979 — about 100,000 people will be entitled to it.

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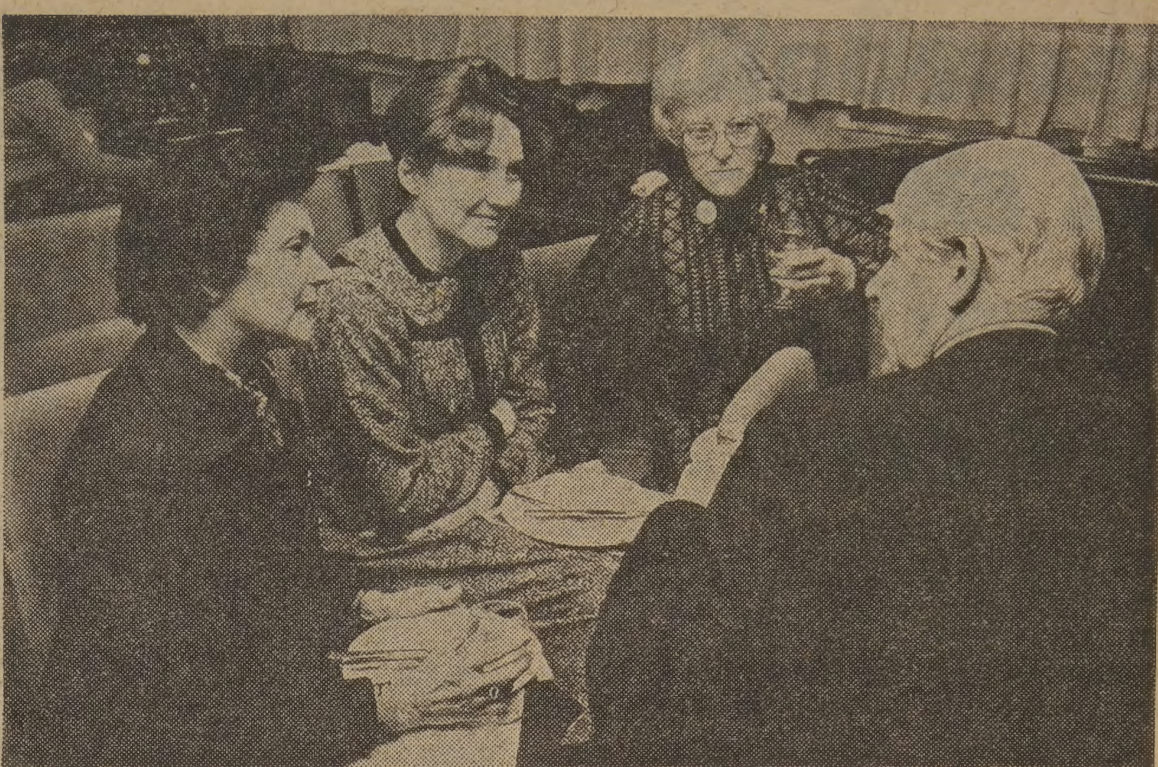
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SN Mar6



March cookery

SHEPHERD'S BATTER (Serves 4)

- 1 large breast home-produced lamb
- 1lb mixed carrots and turnips
- 1pt stock
- Salt and pepper
- 1oz dripping
- 1 teaspoon rosemary
- 1 pt batter

Wipe the lamb. Prepare and chop the carrots and turnips. Put the vegetables in a saucepan, place lamb on top, add stock and seasoning. Cover the pan, simmer gently for one hour. Leave to cool in the pan. Cut meat into small pieces, removing the bones. Heat dripping in a baking tin, add lamb and rosemary, pour in the batter. Bake at 400 deg F, Mark 6, for 35-40 minutes. Make a gravy with the sieved vegetables and stock from the saucepan and serve with the batter.

CHEESE LAYERED PANCAKES

For pancakes: 4oz flour; 1 egg; 1/2 pint milk.

For the filling: 4oz cottage cheese; 2oz cream cheese; salt and pepper to taste; 2 bunches watercress; about 1/2oz butter.

Make pancakes in the normal way, cook as thinly as possible, stack and keep warm. Meanwhile, make the filling by chopping the watercress leaves (discard the stalks) and frying gently, in a little butter, for about five minutes. Place in blender with cottage and cream cheese and mix until creamy. Add a little milk if mixture seems too dry. Season to taste. Alternatively beat cheeses together until creamy, mix in sieved, cooked watercress and seasoning.

Spread over pancakes and layer, with tomatoes and cooked bacon rashers as alternative layers. Or fold mixture into pancakes, roll up and serve decorated with watercress sprigs.

CHICKEN AND TOMATO CUPS (serves 4-8)

- 4-8 large home-grown tomatoes
- 6-8oz cooked chicken meat, minced
- 3oz soft cream cheese
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
- Chopped chives or fresh herbs
- 2 British eggs, hard-boiled
- Salt and pepper.

Cut a small slice off the top of each tomato, scoop out the centres and discard the seeds, chop flesh. Beat cream cheese and mayonnaise together, stir in chicken, chives or herbs, salt, pepper and the chopped tomato flesh. Remove yolk from one of the eggs, chop remaining white and egg, stir into chicken mixture. Pipe or spoon back into tomato cases, sieve egg yolk over tomatoes, set top back on at an angle. Serve one each as a starter to a meal or two as a main course with additional salad and buttered potatoes.

• A SECTION of the attentive audience at the Society's London HQ during the 'Save a Baby' Campaign meeting for reporters and representatives of leading women's organisations.

• DORRIEN Belson, Chairman of The Spastics Society, emphasises the importance of the campaign to: Margaret Sawyers of the Church of Scotland's clubs for women, Elspeth Rhys Williams of the Pre-Life Information Centre, and Eileen Taylor of the Association of Inner Wheel Clubs.

The part parents play in saving their babies

EVERY couple hopes for a normal healthy baby, but can potential parents take positive steps to make the hope a reality?

Dr Eva Alberman, of the Paediatric Research Unit at Guy's Hospital, London, says that they definitely can, and she outlined the measures which help protect babies when she spoke on prevention of cerebral palsy (spasticity) at The Spastics Society's 'Save a Baby' campaign meeting in February. Her comments were of great interest to the representatives of women's organisations attending.

She explained the difference between 'primary' prevention — action which prevents the condition, or illness, from arising at all — and 'secondary' prevention when the illness is treated effectively so that long-term handicapping conditions do not follow, and said:

'Much of the primary prevention of spasticity can only be achieved by the parents themselves, while the secondary prevention in vulnerable children may be a question of seeking, and obtaining the best possible medical and nursing care.'

It was in the field of the primary prevention that the public at large could contribute, and without extra cost, said Dr Alberman. 'In most individual cases we cannot say exactly why the baby was born too early or too small and often there is no obvious reason. However, in general, we do know quite a lot about the type of mother who is most at risk of these complications.'

'These are mothers who may be in ill-health and on various forms of medication; they may have been brought up in poor conditions and never achieved their full potential growth; they may be on a poor diet or heavy smokers; those who conceive at very young ages, or relatively late in life, or who have repeated pregnancies at short intervals. Sometimes they are without adequate family or financial support, and often, particularly the latter group, they are just those who find it most difficult to seek early and regular medical care in pregnancy. Indeed, it is characteristic of all these adverse circumstances that they tend to occur and interact together.'

'Everything we know about these high risk mothers suggests that if we could reduce these adverse circumstances we would also reduce the frequency of premature delivery and poor intrauterine growth. Indeed, in Japan, where personal and social conditions improved dramatically after the last World War, there has been almost a 50 per cent reduction of low birthweight incidence. In this country it has

sadly remained constant over the same period.

'We clearly have in our own hands a possibility of primary prevention. First of all, if all couples were sufficiently caring to make sure that each pregnancy was wanted and expected, fewer would occur at very young or very old ages, or very soon after a previous pregnancy. Moreover, under such circumstances individual preventive action could occur before a pregnancy was undertaken, so that the early few weeks were as free from risk as possible. Thus it would be ideal for each prospective mother to ensure that she had immunity against German measles, either naturally or by immunisation, some time before she became pregnant. She should, wherever possible, cease any medication she was taking, and ideally give up smoking, before pregnancy. She could make special efforts to clear up any minor infections or gynaecological problems and in general try to ensure that her health was at its peak at this time.'

'Certainly, every pregnant woman should, if possible, give up smoking and any unnecessary drugs as soon as she is fairly certain that she is pregnant, and she should obtain the help of her family practitioner to institute her pregnancy care and plan the place of delivery.'

'From our observation of pregnancy outcome in well-educated couples under good social circumstances who tend to take these individual precautions, it is clear that premature delivery and low birthweight could thus be reduced overall. Community and political action, by improving social conditions, supporting those in need of help, by education, and by providing antenatal care facilities at times and places convenient even to the most hard-pressed mother, would undoubtedly contribute further to an overall reduction of risk of both infant death and disability. Again, this becomes a question of priorities, and we can learn from France, where the prevention of infant death and handicap became a major political issue, that results, certainly in the form of reduction of mortality, followed swiftly.'



• MARGARET Franklin from the Royal College of Midwives was impressed with the objectives of the campaign.



• THE problems of expectant mothers in rural areas were voiced by Mrs K. Young from the National Federation of Women's Institutes, pictured (left) speaking to Anita Loring of the International Cerebral Palsy Society. The lack of rural transport often meant that countrywomen could not attend ante-natal clinics, she said.

Prize for service community

DAVID Hopwood, 20, of Aire-dale, Yorkshire, has won the Castleford Lions Youth Award, and was presented with the £10 cash prize by the local Lions President.

David, who is a spastic, won the award for services to the community and outstanding achievements. He will now go forward to the Yorkshire regional finals and attempt to gain a place in the national final which will be held in Jersey.



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SN Mar17

Crossroads will share a family's burden

RELATIVES who look after severely disabled people at home can often cope indefinitely if there is someone else to share the burden for at least a few hours a week. But if no help is available, the caring relative may crack up under the strain and two members of the family will have to be admitted to hospital at great expense to the State.

It would seem such an easy solution to organise a rota of paid staff to visit the homes of disabled people so that hard-pressed relatives could go shopping, have an evening out or get an uninterrupted night's sleep. But local authorities have in the past been reluctant to provide this type of domiciliary care because it fell between the two stools of community nursing and the home help service.

It took the imagination of a group of television people to cut through the

red tape and initiate a scheme which has brought new hope to disabled people and their families in the Midlands and is now expanding into other parts of the country.

The scheme is called 'Crossroads' after the long-running television serial made by ATV. One episode showed a character who was involved in an accident and came out of hospital in a wheelchair.

Noel Crane, a viewer who had broken his neck in a diving accident, telephoned ATV in Birmingham to comment on the medical sequences, and eventually became friends with Reg Watson, the programme's producer. During a visit to the Crane's home, Reg saw what a strain Noel's disability placed on his widowed mother and their problems were written into the 'Crossroads' script.

After this, ATV put up £10,000 for a two-year pilot scheme of providing care assistants for the severely physically handicapped living at home. In 1974, the scheme was set



● PETER Smith, of Cawston, near Rugby, shares the pleasures of reading with Crossroads care attendant Margaret Fone. Peter is spastic and his family is just one of many who have found life easier since the introduction of the Crossroads Scheme in the Rugby area.

'A scheme which could revolutionise the care of the handicapped in Britain'

up in Rugby where Noel Crane is now Chairman of the management committee.

Mrs Pat Osborne, a District Nursing Sister, took over the organisation, at first on a voluntary basis. This was in addition to her nursing job and running a

home for her husband and herself.

The care attendants are recruited by advertisements in the local newspaper. They are paid an hourly rate, just above that of Home Help, with overtime for night and weekend duties. They receive basic training with the district nurses but most of their routine is learnt from the relative who normally looks after the disabled person. Care is taken to match the personality of the care attendant with that of the person being helped.

Pat Osborne emphasised that the work was quite different from that of home helps.

'There has been criticism from the nursing profession because we use untrained people,' she said. 'But they're only doing what relatives have been doing for years.'

Towards the end of the two-year pilot scheme between 40 and 60 visits were being made by care attendants each week and 28 families were being helped.

The Rugby scheme has proved such a success that it is being extended into other parts of Britain. From April 1978, Crossroads will be operating in Daventry, Northants; Braintree, Essex; Islington, London; North Tyneside; Glasgow; Southend; Rochdale, Lancashire; and Dereham, Norfolk.

'And this time last year,' said Pat triumphantly, 'There was only Rugby.'

Pat has now given up the administration of the Rugby project because she has been appointed national director of the entire Crossroads scheme. 'One minute I was a district nurse and the next I was director of a rapidly expanding charity,' she laughed, and recalled being asked to give a talk on her work. 'The person making the introductions referred to "our distinguished speaker" and I was looking round for this exalted per-

sonage before I realised it was me.'

At present she has to do all her own typing and sometimes, for fun, she will answer the telephone with the words 'This is the director's secretary.'

She is now busy appointing local co-ordinators for the eight new areas in which the scheme will operate. These will be nursing sisters, occupational therapists or other professional people and will be responsible to a local management committee which is expected to include at least one disabled person.

To co-ordinate these local efforts there will be a Crossroads National Council on which will sit representatives from various voluntary organisations for the disabled. The Spastics Society will be represented by Derek Lancaster Gaye, Director of Resources.

Another link with The Spastics Society will be the printing of Crossroads literature at our Meadway works in Birmingham. Thus, while several individual spastics are already on the receiving end of the scheme, others are working to help keep administrative costs down.

Crossroads is financed from a variety of sources. The original £10,000 subsidy from ATV kept it going for the first two years. Then the DHSS made a grant to continue the scheme in Rugby and contributed a further sum in 1977 so that the national office could be set up. Voluntary organisations for the disabled have also helped financially.

A few months ago, the EEC

Hostel's tourist 'boom'

A year ago, Stuart Lawton, warden of the Society's Broadstone Hostel, Birmingham, was asked by an organiser of Het Dorp, the handicapped village near Arnhem, Holland, if he could accommodate a couple of spastics if they came to England on holiday.

A few weeks ago the phone rang in Stuart's office. It was the organiser ringing from Holland to ask if he could put up 40!

'It was all quite a shock but I've told him we can do it although it means there will be mattresses everywhere. They are only spending one night in Birmingham and then they will be sight-seeing round various places. Now I'm waiting for another phone call to confirm the details for their stop-over sometime in March!'

made a £100,000 grant to the Department of the Environment for research into the housing problems of severely disabled people. This includes study of the ways in which they can be helped to live in the community rather than go into residential care. The DHSS and local authorities will also be involved.

Although the project will be linked with Crossroads—the agency through which the money will be channelled—the £100,000 will not be used directly to support the scheme.

'Some newspaper stories about the EEC grant have given an entirely wrong impression,' said Pat. 'People think I've unlimited funds available to help disabled people, but it's not true.'

Pat ran the original local scheme from home but she now operates from a small attic room in Whitehall Road, Rugby, above the group medical practice for which she used to work as a community nurse. Sharing the building with former colleagues makes her feel less isolated in these early days of her new appointment.

Although she finds it exciting to be in at the start of a new venture, the responsibility, she admits, is 'a bit frightening.'

She will, after all, be setting up a scheme which, if successful, could revolutionise the care of the physically handicapped in Britain.

ANNE PLUMMER.



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SN Mar11

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SN Mar18

Charlie runs a swap shop of human compassion

VERY Sunday afternoon the listening millions tune into Charlie Chester's Show. The man who made his name as a comedian is now the focus of a massive tide of goodwill that ebbs and flows between the 'have's' and 'have-nots.' His programme does more than cheer but provides a valuable opportunity for people to be 'good neighbours.' Between the music he appeals for everything from long lost brothers and sisters to washing machines and wheelchairs, and many lonely, old and handicapped people have reason to be grateful to him.

LIZ COOK

It is a dozen years since Charlie had the brainwave which has made the listening millions aware of the feelings of others and brought help of every kind into the lives of people grown desperate. Yet the brainwave did not see the light of day or perhaps it was accurately the lives of ether.

"I saw it this way," said Charlie. "Housewives' voice" ran for 21 years—because housewives had to hear their names on the radio. Every news-er runs a letters column why—because there's a d. Yet it took four years and two pilot shows to sell the idea to the BBC.

First plea for help

Well, one day I got a letter from a woman whose husband was blind, legless and very poor. She wrote that a typewriter would give him a new lease of life. Well, I thought, there must be hundreds of typewriters hanging about in attics gathering dust. I was right—after doing the work, 588 were donated.

That single letter was the start of a post bag that lives at Pebble Mill, the BBC's Birmingham studio where Charlie broadcasts, with 1,400 letters—every week.

From typewriters it blossomed to wheelchairs, now I name it, washing machines, anything that people don't want but others can't afford. What I try to do is get people near to their neighbour—and I don't want to get such hatred in the world it's nice to be the trigger of something good.

I got a letter from a lady in an old folks' home in Aston saying she typed her feet and needed a typewriter. I had just four portables sent to with a note asking for them to be given to someone "less fortunate than self"—and the donor was in Broadmoor! How you get to be less fortunate?

Anyway, I had one in the boot of the car and I was near Brixton so I went to find this lady. It was a nice place, corridors everywhere, and eventually I found her—she had no

hands. I asked her if she would mind showing me how she worked. She whipped off her shoes and started typing.

A car for the nuns

'Now she is living in her own house in Esher, driving her own car, all with money she earned from the articles she typed on that machine. Another writer was an old man who'd just come into money. He was buying a new car and he wanted to give the old one away... but to whom? The Little Sisters of the Poor needed a car at the time but he was too shy to give it to them straight out, instead he drove up to the door, rang the bell and when they came out to look, there it was waiting with a bunch of flowers on the seat for the Mother Superior.

'Then we got a letter from a remote part of Canada from the lady Mayor saying that although they couldn't receive my programme they thought I might be able to help. They had a pond but no swans to swim on it. Could I get a couple from the Thames?

'Well, it was a bit of a tall order. There are three owners—the Queen and two livery companies. I took a chance with the companies, and as a result two swans were flown to Nova Scotia. We never met but a lot of people were very happy.'

Happy endings

Some tales have happier endings than others. Charlie makes a great deal of use of voluntary associations such as Lions, Rotary and Round Table. He got a letter from a listener saying: 'If you don't call in 12 hours I shall be dead.' Charlie took the message seriously but it was impossible to be there in time—he was at the opposite end of the country. So he contacted the local Lion friend who arrived with his wife just in time to stop the woman committing suicide.

'You see, I've never forgotten the time I received a letter from a woman saying, "Can you help me—I can't afford to buy my kid a birthday present." I put it to one side. I thought, "Well, I've been skint, I've known what it is like to be poor, but it's not the end of the world."

'The next day my secretary



Cherful Charlie Chester

saw the letter and she said to me, "You know, it's sad," and in the end I got the local Lions to go round—but she had committed suicide the day before.'

The Lions and other volunteers move the items all over the country. They also check out the would-be recipients.

'I had a whole load of ham radio gear to give away to a wounded ex-Service man, and got two letters asking for it. The Lions discovered that one letter was from a dealer in radio parts—and the other from a blind survivor of HMS Hood.'

you won't starve with the Welfare State.

'I used to lean towards the crippled kiddies, poor little beggars, but they've got the rest of their lives to look forward to. Now I think of the old folk who have got nothing but a hole in the ground ahead of them. It's strange this charity business. You can't blame a bloke for spending the money he's earned in a betting shop—but think what the money could do.'

Charlie himself once put

out a request—it was to fellow ex-King Rat of the Water Rats charity organisation, Prince Philip. Charlie is behind the Charlie Chester Holiday Homes and there was one near the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham. Charlie knew it would give the kids a thrill to see the Prince so he asked if he would visit the next time he was in the area.

'I got into the BBC to find the security man saying, "Ere Charlie, there's been Buckingham Palace on the line for you." The message was that "He would bring the missus".'

Smiling Queen

And sure enough it was the Queen herself Charlie escorted round the holiday cabin. He carries a little colour snapshot showing a smiling Queen being led out of the cabin by Charlie.

'I'm singing "I wouldn't leave my little wooden hut for you" to her, that's why she's laughing,' said Charlie.

You may not hear the latest of the New Wave musicians expounding their punk philosophies on Charlie's show and the poetry is not quite what devotees of Radio 3 think 'divine,' but tuning into Charlie is to tune into a mono-coloured swapshop of human caring.

Charlie is broadcasting to the compassionate majority.

Firms flout job quota

ONLY 18,696 firms in the country have complied with the quota ruling that a minimum three per cent of their workforce must be registered disabled. This represents 37 per cent, and only two government departments satisfied the quota.

These figures were given by Under-Secretary of State for Employment, John Grant, in reply to a question put by the Labour member for Gravesend, John Owen-

Only here for the beer tops

SAILORS of HMS Jupiter, whose home port is Middlesbrough, devised a novel way of raising money for charity. They held a competition to guess how many beer can tops were in a bottle. The answer was 1,342 and £43 was collected for the Cleveland Spastics' work centre.

The money was handed over when a party from the work centre came to look over HMS Jupiter moored in the Tees. It will be used towards a theatre outing for the workers to Scarborough.

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SN Mar9

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in the Midlands area, where he could be the youngest child in the family. John is a cerebral-palsied child. He has made great strides in the past year with his speech and walking and he could make greater progress if he can live in a family where he can have individual attention. He is an affectionate, responsive and attractive child.

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SN Mar20

Christopher could sit back and wait to be helped. Instead he works for others. Why?

CHRISTOPHER Waters was just three years old when he ran after his ball as it rolled into the road — and the path of a car. Now 32, Christopher lives with the damage done by the car and describes the accident as: 'My own silly fault. I am subnormal but not very physically handicapped.'

The Waters family — Christopher has two younger brothers — lived in Dover at the time and when it came to schooling, despite medical pressure for him to go to a special school the headmaster of the local secondary modern successfully fought to have Christopher as his pupil.

Christopher enjoyed the work but at the age of 16 he had a nervous breakdown which he attributes to the reading he was doing for a social politics course.

Job search

The breakdown meant 16 months in St Augustine's Mental Hospital, Canterbury. 'When I got better I went back to Dover but there never seemed to be the right jobs. Then my father was moved to Maidstone to work at County Hall as the assistant town planner, and again I went for job after job.'

Still Christopher found suitable employment impossible to obtain and this led to the start of his voluntary career in caring for others. It began with shaking a collecting box for Oxfam and soon Christopher had raised £300 in funds.

'I did so much voluntary work that, when I was 26, I had another nervous breakdown. But this time



• SPASTICS News reporter Liz Cook interviews Christopher Waters — complete with the parish magazine he delivers — about his charity work.

I was able to go to Oakwood Hospital in Maidstone as a day-patient.'

After six months Christopher was sent to a hostel where he says he was very unhappy.

By this time Christopher was on the local Shelter Committee, still collecting

for other charities and visiting two centres for the handicapped to help with the work there. He was getting his State invalidity pension but at the end of the week he only saw 50p of it. And what he wanted was a job where he could earn a living wage.

The local paper, the 'Kent Messenger,' took up his case, and at the same time Christopher was sent to Egham Rehabilitation Centre. He was there a month—the day after he came out he got a job.

Christopher started at a local electric light firm in July 1974—and he is still there—earning over £33 a week.

'I work in a team putting items on the turntable, transferring them to the ovens, glazing, packing and loading for export. And I get three weeks holiday a year on top of the £33 a week. That's after getting 50p while I was at the hostel—I feel I was being exploited.'

He saves money for the future but for the present is very much concerned with others who cannot help themselves so well. In addition to Oxfam and Shelter, he has been a member of the Maidstone and District Spastics Group for 10 years and is now a committee member. He delivers his local parish magazine and also regularly visits three elderly ladies who are housebound to check that they are well.

'I have collected thousands and thousands of pounds for charity but I like helping people — because I've been helped myself I want to make my contribution to society,' he says.

New prospect for creative self expression

READERS who enjoy holidays with a purpose such as practising the creative arts or visits to museums, galleries or the theatre, will be interested to hear of the Harford Group.

The group was formed this year by a number of disabled

and able-bodied people who had attended courses at Prospect Hall, Birmingham. Although the college there is no longer in operation, the Harford Group is determined not to let its 1975 and 1976 courses become just a pleasant memory, but aims to run its own courses in painting, pottery, poetry, drama and music.

The group, named after Miss Honoria Harford, who pioneered Prospect Hall, is

run by a democratically elected committee and is devoted specifically to the creative arts.

An able-bodied member of a course held at Prospect Hall, in 1976, commented: 'I found it an invigorating and stimulating experience. I was chiefly impressed by the atmosphere of informal friendliness and the dedicated way in which everyone got on with their chosen means of self expression.'

Further details from the Secretary — Mrs Phyllis Smith, Belle Vue House, Sea Palling, Norwich NR12 0UX.

University's sporting challenge

COMPETITION, enjoyment, and the hope that disabled people will become more aware of their abilities by meeting new challenges. Those are the ideas behind Birmingham University's Sports Club for the Disabled.

The club is open — without charge — to all disabled people whether or not they are members of the University.

The chairman of the new club will be Professor E. A. Marsland, a Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of the Department of Oral Pathology in the Dental School. He is chairman of the Committee for Disabled Members of the University, and is himself dependent on a wheelchair since contracting poliomyelitis in 1946.

The club has grown from small beginnings last April when Professor Marsland and Mr Max Madders (who recently retired as Assistant Director of Physical Education) encouraged about 20 disabled swimmers to use the new swimming pool each Sunday. Subsequently Dr David Pugh, full-time field officer for the Guild of Students 'Community Action,' asked that the facilities be made available to mentally handicapped children and this was followed by the admission of a number of spastic children from Carlson House School, Harborne, who had lost their reserved water time when one of the City's pools were closed. Now about 10 spastics use the pool each Sunday, and three of them have learned to swim without assistance.

Several of the swimmers then began to take up table tennis, indoor archery, weight training and other sport. There is no shortage of helpers. Students and staff from physical education, law, medicine and other disciplines are already regularly volunteering their services. 'The expertise that we need is all around us,' Professor Marsland says.

The next venture will be into outdoor sports, including wheelchair racing and 'wheelchair slalom.' The main impetus to the development of

sport for the disabled in this country came, Professor Marsland says, from Sir Ludwig Guttmann when he was director of spinal injuries at St. Mandeville Hospital. One of his contributions was to develop five classifications of ability for wheelchair patients so that they could compete within their own group's physical potential.

'Wheelchair racing enthusiasts are just like car enthusiasts. They strip the machines and re-build them endlessly to cut down weight and increase the speed. A favourite modification is to set the wheels at an angle that when hand motion is applied the tyres make maximum contact with the ground. Another is to substitute racing tyres for treaded ones.'

Professor Marsland visited the University of Illinois in April and found that they were far ahead of us in their provision for the disabled. The campus there were 450 disabled students of whom around 100 were blind.

'While every possible facility was made available (even Playboy Magazine in braille), the emphasis was on making people learn to help themselves to the limit of their capacity. The recurring theme in the work of the Rehabilitation-Education Centre in Illinois is 'it's ability counts.' This is in contrast to this country where there is a great deal of under-expectation on the part of parents and teachers. Disabled people are not challenged to realise their full potential; the instinct to cosset them, and it is assumed that the Welfare State will take care of the rest.'

It is the hope of all concerned with the sports of disabled people that in addition to providing competition and enjoyment will play its part in developing in many disabled a greater awareness of their abilities.

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SN Mar1



A reason to smile

LINE-up of smiling faces when Mr Derek Johnson, of Harrow, Middlesex, received his £5,000 first dividend cheque. From left to right: Mr Reg Harwood, Spastics Pool area supervisor, Mrs Pamela Johnson, and Derek (the lucky winner); Councillor A. G. Sellers, Mayor of Harrow, and Spastics Pool collector for 13 years, Mrs Audrey Hickman.

Spirit of devotion lives on

FREDERICK Sloper devoted his life to helping handicapped children. He joined The Spastics Society in September 1955 and was still working when he suddenly collapsed and died at the Society's Ingfield Manor School, Sussex, on November 18.

However the family link is not being broken because his widow, Margaret, who is moving out of the staff flat at the School at the beginning of March, is taking a cottage locally so she can continue the work to which her husband committed his life. Her special interest is in the school's social training unit helping the children during their leisure time with activities like swimming.

Mr Sloper was a senior houseparent at the Society's Craig-Y-Parc school for six years before becoming deputy patron at Meldreth Manor School where he stayed eight years. The Slopers then moved to Nottingham where Mr Sloper was nurse-in-charge for a year until he came to Ingfield Manor as a senior houseparent 18 months before his death.

Ingfield's headmistress, Mrs Rosemary Siddles, said: 'Mr Sloper's death came as a great shock. In his life he had helped hundreds of spastic children. Tributes came from all over the country and at the funeral the children of Ingfield Manor gave a posy they had made from flowers picked from the school garden.'

Mr Sloper, who was 60, had a son and a daughter.

The Society's North East region has donated £1,200 to the Family Service and Assessment Centre in Fitzroy Square, London.



News about the Spastics Pool

MRS Jean Jackson, of Catforth Avenue, Blackpool, who won £3,333 on the Spastics Pool, receives her cheque from the Mayor of Blackpool, Councillor Cyril Nuttall.

Jean plans to take her

husband and three children on a 'good holiday' this summer.

Pictured with Jean and the Mayor are Spastics Pool supervisor Mr S. Dempsey, left, and collector Mr L. Rimmer.



ISLE of Man winner Miss Dolly Bell receiving her first dividend cheque for £5,000 from Mr W. Quirk,

member of the House of Keys (left). Also pictured is Laurie Watterson, Spastics Pool area supervisor for the Isle of Man.

The new lottery — page 12

Mobility allowance fight may ease rules for all

THE story in last month's Spastics News about a couple's long battle to win mobility payment for their mongol son has now had a sequel in a House of Commons statement. In reply to a Parliamentary question from Mrs Barbara Hoyle MP, Mr David Gammans, Secretary of State for Social Services, said that such people should be able to qualify more readily for mobility allowance.

Mr Ennals told the Commons that he had studied the legal and medical implications of the National Insurance Commissioner's decision in the case of Robert Edmunds of Worcester. In view of the Commissioner's decision that Robert was entitled to the allowance, Mr Ennals thought that regulations should be made to ensure that similar cases would benefit.

He said: 'My aim is to ensure that people who have a physical condition which results in a mental handicap and as a consequence are

unable to walk, receive mobility allowance. This will include all those suffering from Down's Syndrome (mongolism) who are unable or virtually unable to walk. It cannot, of course, include those who are unable to walk by reason of mental disablement alone.

'When the new regulations are made, we shall do all we can to bring them to the attention of those who may be eligible. This will include a scrutiny of cases which have been disallowed since mobility allowance was introduced.'

National network of speakers on 'Save a Baby'

SPEAKERS on the Society's 'Save a Baby' Campaign can always be arranged in any part of England and Wales. If you require one for a meeting please contact the following in the appropriate area:

NORTH EAST

Senior Regional Officer: Mr C. R. Wood, Royal Chambers, Station Parade, Harrogate HG1 1EP. Telephone: 0423 69655.

Covers the area of Northumberland, Durham, Cleveland, Tyne and Wear, and Yorkshire.

NORTH WEST

Senior Regional Officer, Mr Nigel Smith, Room 481, 89 Oxford Street, Manchester M1 6FG. Telephone: 061 236 2088.

Covers the area of Cumbria, Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire (High Peak).

MIDLANDS

Senior Regional Officer: Mr Michael Venables, Albany House, 31 Hurst Street, Birmingham B5 4BD. Telephone: 021 622 4694.

Covers the area of Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, Leicestershire, Birmingham, Warwickshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire.

EAST

Senior Regional Officer: Mr

Cyril Cattell, Broadway Chambers, Station Place, Letchworth, Herts SG6 3AF. Telephone: 046 26 71911.

Covers the area of Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Oxfordshire.

SOUTH EAST

Senior Regional Officer: Mr Iain Fowler, Donaldson House, Massetts Road, Horley, Surrey RH6 7QZ. Telephone: 029 34 71211.

Covers the area of Kent, Surrey, East Sussex, West Sussex, Hampshire.

WEST

Senior Regional Officer: Miss Charmian Mould, 19 The Crescent, Taunton, Somerset TA1 4EB. Telephone: 0823 81678.

Covers the area of Cornwall, Devonshire, Somerset, Dorsetshire, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Avon.

LONDON

Senior Regional Officer: Miss Judith Lane, 76 Cambridge Road, Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey KT1 3LB. Telephone: 01 549 5988.

Covers the Greater London area.

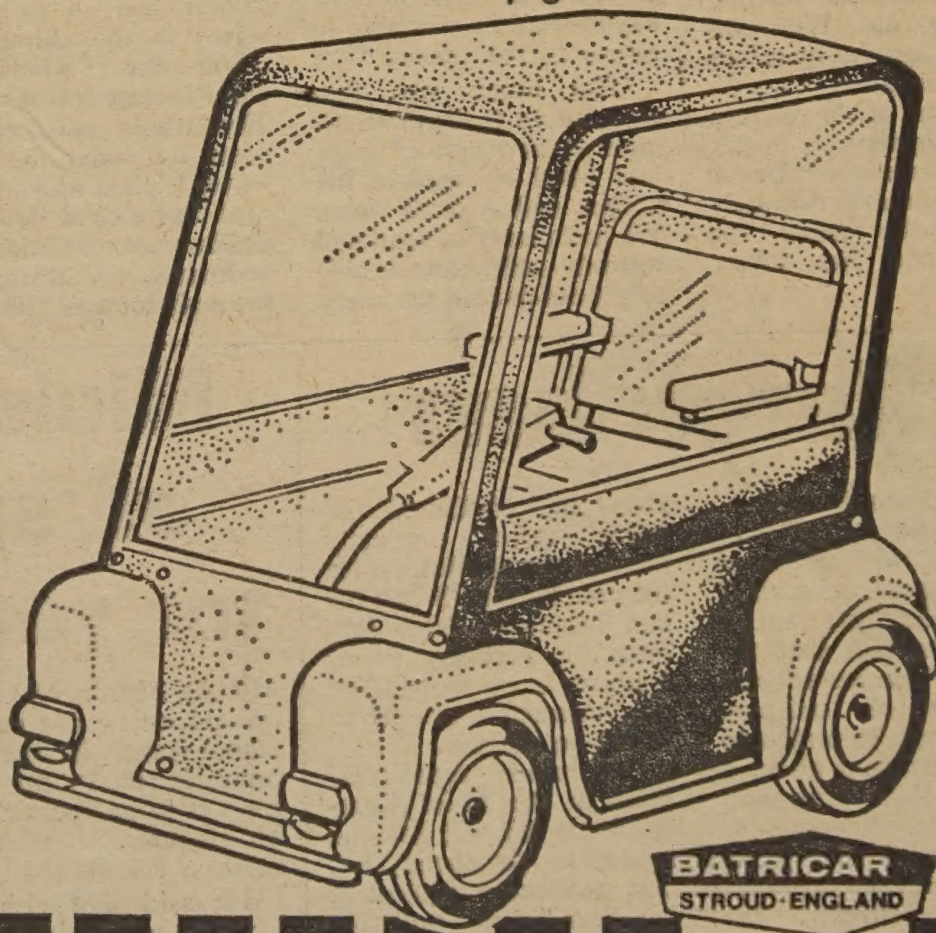
WALES

Senior Regional Officer: Mr Emlyn Davies, 45 Park Place, Cardiff CF1 3BB. Telephone: 0222 30749.

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One Stone is losing two...



YOU can lead the local appeal officer in the Society's West Region to a banquet but you cannot make her eat. Ply her with chocolate eclairs, sizzling fry-ups, cream doughnuts and the response is a stony-faced refusal. For the aptly named Valerie Stone has two stone to shed in the sponsored slim she is spearheading.

The owners of the glutinous appetites of the West Country, housed as they may be in every shape, size and sex, are being exhorted to lose weight and raise money for the Society's 'Save a Baby' campaign. People in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset are licking their lips and tightening their belts as signed-up participants, while Valerie is determined to get Avon, Gloucestershire, Bristol and Herefordshire plumpies in the Slim, too.

A ball will be held on May 13 for the sylph-like successes and the Slimmer of the West will be chosen from those who have taken part in the sponsorship scheme. The winner will be seen on Westward TV and, on the serious side of the competition, an eminent paediatrician will be appearing on 'Westward Diary' to answer questions on the prevention of handicap as part of the 'Save a Baby' campaign.

In the meantime Devon cream teas are definitely not on the menu for Valerie and her fellow slimmers.

New lottery will raise funds for 'Save a Baby' campaign

TOP Ten Promotions Ltd — promoters of the Spastics Pool — will introduce weekly lotteries to raise funds for The Spastics Society's 'Save a baby from being born spastic' campaign. The aim is to provide The

Spastics Society with extra income to be used exclusively on education and research to reduce the number of babies being born needlessly handicapped.

The target is to sell 40,000 tickets at 25 pence each, every week. Lotteries will be organised regionally to, hope-

fully, ensure local winners, but this does not restrict the sale of tickets. Prizes will total almost £4,000 with a first prize of £1,000, second prize of £500, five third prizes of £100, and up to 150 consolation prizes.

Needless to say The Spastics Society is delighted with the new development, and Mr Michael Brophy, Direc-

tor of Fund Raising, described the lottery as 'the icing on the cake of the Spastics Pool.' He thought that members of the Pool—they pay 10p a go with the chance of winning a top dividend of £10,000 and hundreds of other prizes—would welcome the chance of an extra 'flutter' for a good cause.

Sales of lottery tickets will not be confined to

regular Spastics Pool collectors, and Mr Brophy appeals for members of the Society's local voluntary groups to make vigorous efforts to sell as many tickets as possible in each region. The lottery is simple to operate with very little administration for the sellers.

First batch of tickets are expected to go on sale next month.

20-foot drifts cut off centre Spastics in blizzard drama

TWELVE handicapped residents from the Society's Thorngrove Centre in Gillingham, Dorset, set off to the Saturday matinee of 'The Wilderness Family' at a Wincanton cinema 10 miles away. And that was the last the centre saw of them for four days.

The snow that engulfed the south west was responsible, cutting off the roads with 20ft drifts. Eight residents were lodged in a local hostel while the other four were accommodated in a convent.

Thorngrove's warden, Ted Rhodes fared no better. He set off for home on Saturday night from a function in Bristol, and was trapped between two 15ft snow drifts, and had to spend the first night in a garage. It was another three days before he was able to return to the centre.

'The house was surrounded to a depth of almost three feet and snow had piled up against the hedges and covered them. We had plenty of food and warmth and we were able to get out to feed the sheep

drama

and cattle but almost a week later we are still unable to retrieve two of our vehicles,' he said. 'We haven't had anything like this since 1963 when the snow lasted for weeks and weeks. Two other members of staff were caught out, one couldn't get in for two days and another for four. The drifts in the road up to Thorngrove were deep enough to bury a car.'

Because the snow came at the weekend, workers at the Eric Robinson Work Centre, Trengweath, Plymouth, were not too badly affected. The snow according to warden Roy Johnson was the worst seen for 30 years and completely cut off the out-lying districts.

At the Gladys Holman House, Cambourne, Cornwall, Warden J. O. Dillar and handyman John Dower had to tie themselves to the chimney in storm force 11 winds to repair damage to the roof. The winds smashed the snow up under the eaves where it piled up under the roof and melted down the inside walls, soaking two bedrooms, and through to the main lounge. The water

also shorted out the emergency fire detecting equipment.

It was a different story at the Churchtown Farm Field Studies Centre, Lannivery, Cornwall. Said Warden Dr Michael Cotton: 'Everyone, including me, has had parents and friends ringing up saying "How are you getting on?" because they thought it was impenetrable here. In fact we had just one and a half inches of snow and it was gone in under four hours.'

Right Royal reason for skipping school

THERE will be little work done at the Society's Ingfield Manor School on March 10, for that is the day the Queen will be driving past, and on a garage forecourt opposite the school entrance will be massed 50 of Her Majesty's most loyal subjects.

Children and staff will be waving Union Jacks as the Queen's motorcade slows down to take the sharp right hand bend in the

road. They hope she might even stop for them.

The Queen will be opening the New Queen Elizabeth School in Horsham to which Ingfield's head Mrs Rosemary Siddles has been invited, and it was Ingfield's head cleaner who heard that the Queen's route would take her past the school.

A local policeman suggested the garage forecourt as a good vantage point for the children, some of whom will be in wheelchairs, and only Mrs Siddles will miss the fun.

The day the Queen asked Bill about his job



BILL Hargreaves, the Society's Head of Recreational Services, is pictured outside Buckingham Palace after receiving his MBE with (left) his daughter Margaret, his wife Mary and son Brian.

The Queen spent long time talking to Bill, who is spastic, than any other MBE recipients at the Investiture. 'What do you do?' she asked, and he told her that his work involved helping spastic people to use their leisure time constructively.

'That's rather new, isn't it?' commented the Queen showing that she was fully aware of the different types of services being provided for the disabled.

March ban

Cont. from Page 1

group, who will be one of the rally speakers, said: 'I support the ban but I deplore the fact that the National Front has affected the right of ordinary British people to protest to their Government about a genuine social grievance. They, after all, want to draw attention to a problem—not stir up trouble.'

Michael Brophy, the Society's Fund Raising Director, took a tough line when he said: 'There's no chance that we can march unless the ban is rescinded, and I'm sickened at the thought that a charity has been sacrificed like this because of the activities of the lunatic fringe. It's absolutely wicked.'

Police at Cannon Row

Police Station's Ceremonial Office who originally handled the application for the march, said: 'When the ban originally came into force on February 24 at 6 am we never thought for one moment this march would be affected.'

'We made representations to the Chief Commissioner himself for the march to go ahead, but now the order against it has been taken—probably by an Assistant Commissioner. We have had to examine individually every application for a march since the banning order, and we had hoped that this march would be included in the exemption—or that the Act would come to an end at 6 am, April 23. But it is too late by just one day.'

Minister highlights lack of 'special care' places for young adults

MR Alf Morris, MP, Minister for the Disabled, officially opened a new day care centre for severely handicapped school leavers in Buckinghamshire on February 28. The centre is run by the South Bucks Spastics Society with support from Bucks Social Services Department, and Mr Morris praised it as an excellent example of co-operation between voluntary and statutory bodies.

He said that although local authorities had made marked progress in the provision of adult training centres for the mentally handicapped, there was a need for more places and in particular for places in 'special care units' for the most severely handicapped. There were far too few such units for those leaving special schools who would otherwise have to

remain at home all day. Special help and training was needed to enable them to develop skills already learnt and to acquire new ones.

'Like the rest of us,' said Mr Morris, 'mentally and physically handicapped people do not stop learning at the age of 16.'

He concluded his speech with the words, 'While it takes no vision to see the problems of disabled people, it does take

vision to see their abilities.'

The unit, called the George Mason Centre, is housed in the building previously used by the South Bucks Spastics Society as a school for handicapped children, who have now been moved to the Park Crescent School in High Wycombe.

It is designed to provide day care for some 12 or 15 young adults who are severely handicapped both mentally and physically. All are unable to work even in sheltered employment and most are dependent for personal care. Many of them are incontinent and need constant attention. The group feels that above all they need mental stimulation if they are to achieve any quality of life.

More about the centre, together with pictures of the official opening in next month's issue of Spastics News.

Spell-in cash

PUPILS of Lyndhurst Junior School, Hollins, Oldham, have raised £335 with a sponsored spell. This has been donated to Greater Manchester Spastics Society, which will use the money on a holiday. By way of saying 'thank you,' the Society has given the children some specially-made sports holdalls.

SPASTICS NEWS

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